

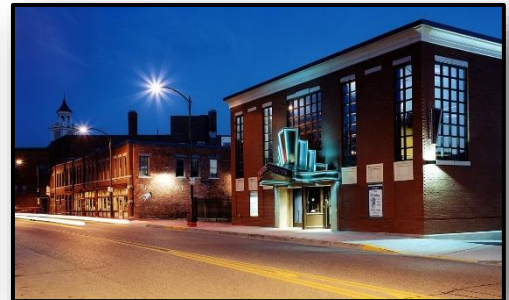
February 23, 2021

The performing and visual arts are alive in Hamilton, NY!

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our personal and professional lives, some of us seek refuge in outdoor activities, reading, or even meditation. And friends of Hamilton, NY, know they can visit Arts at the Palace online for plenty of creative inspiration. Despite the challenges facing many non-profit organizations and community theaters, Arts at the Palace has found a way to stay afloat...and thrive.

Founded in 2015 by a group of community volunteers, Arts at the Palace (AATP) occupies the Palace Theater in downtown Hamilton. The property is owned and operated by Colgate University, but the activities and programs are all managed by the AATP board of directors – a group of arts enthusiasts who care about the cultural benefits of music, theater, and art for the village. “The recent pandemic has certainly challenged our organization to find new and creative ways to live up to our mission as a community arts organization dedicated to presenting, developing, and expanding the reach of the arts within the central NY region,” says Debra Barker, President of Arts at the Palace.

Arts at the Palace has always been a financially lean organization that depends on ticket sales, venue rentals, and live shows to “keep the lights on.” In April 2020, they hired Elizabeth Douglas as their Executive Director – a Hamilton neighbor who had a background in design and grant writing. Faced with an unusual challenge, Douglas quickly rewrote a strategic plan for Arts at the Palace which emphasized online learning, virtual arts experiences, and grant proposals. Tim Mansfield, Vice President, says, “We are so pleased with Elizabeth’s creativity and can-do attitude. She helped us rethink how to operate, and also how to rebrand our identity during this pandemic.” Since the summer of 2020, Douglas has helped the organization secure federal COVID-19 relief funding and several grants, including an award from Humanities New York with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.



In a small, rural, college town, cooperation with local partners can be a strong advantage. Arts at the Palace maintains important strategic ties with the [Partnership for Community Development](#) and the [Hamilton Business Alliance](#). Likewise, Colgate is developing its artistic footprint in its curriculum for students. According to Colgate’s [Third Century Plan](#), the institution “reaffirms its belief that artistic expression, creative thinking, and innovation must be hallmarks of a Colgate education. The Middle Campus Plan for Arts, Creativity, and Innovation is not only a rethinking of the role of the arts and creativity at Colgate, but a rethinking of the campus itself. Through the long-term development of this region of the campus, Colgate will address long-standing needs in arts and creative facilities and set a new standard for the teaching and creation of the arts, creativity, and innovation within a liberal arts context.” Arts at the Palace is excited to renew its partnership with Colgate as it begins its third century.

If you have not heard about the exciting new initiatives at Arts at the Palace, read them [here](#). You’ll learn about art education workshops, creative placemaking, and their own “*From Script to Stage*” which brings original theater scripts to the stage. The future looks bright for the arts in Hamilton, NY. Whether in person or online, Arts at the Palace is a place to visit. Says Barker, “As we look forward to 2021, Arts at the Palace will continue developing innovative programs into our new normal. We are also working on new collaborations for using our space in a manner consistent with our mission.”